

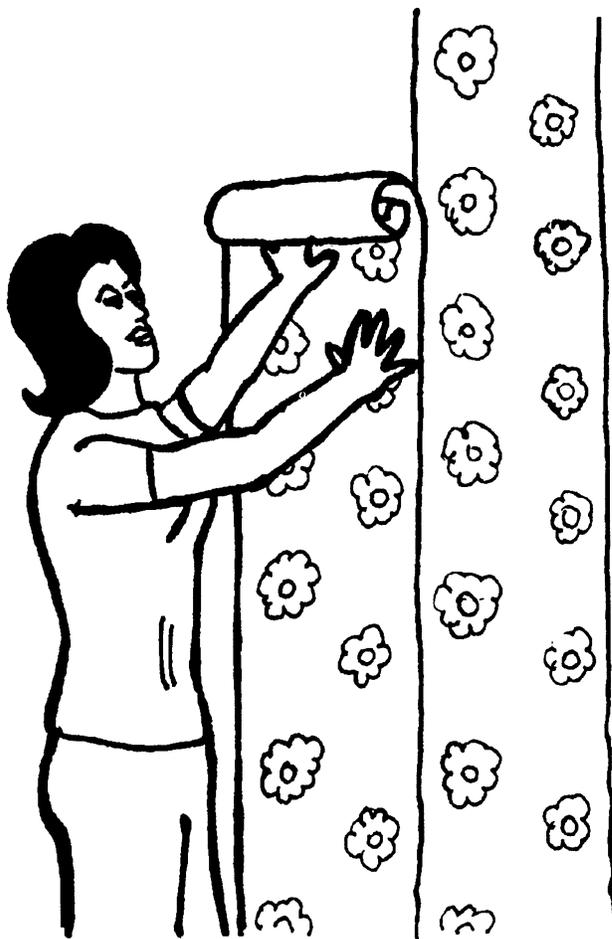
US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

# Renovating Your Home

## 1 Home Repairs

*Directions:* Read the following passage.

Manuel and Isabel Ramirez searched for two years before they found their perfect home. The two-story house was near Manuel's job and two blocks from the neighborhood park. Many of Isabel and Manuel's friends lived in the same neighborhood. The house also had a big backyard and enough space inside for Isabel, Manuel, and their three young children—Matthew, Peppe, and Sandra. It needed some renovation, but Manuel was very good at home repairs.



After the Ramirez family moved in, Manuel began renovating the house. He scraped the old paint off the kitchen cabinets and he sanded the door frames, windows, and trim down to the original wood. Isabel removed the old wallpaper in one of the bedrooms and put up new wallpaper. She also vacuumed all the dust created by the renovation. The place was looking good.

Yet, soon after Manuel and Isabel began the renovation, the children became sick. The new baby, Sandra, cried all the time and would not eat. Matthew and Peppe, ages 3 and 4, complained of stomachaches and were always tired. The doctor found nothing wrong.

One day, Isabel was reading a magazine while waiting in line at the grocery store. In the magazine, she found a story on lead poisoning. The story described symptoms that matched her

children’s behavior, so she called her doctor’s office. The nurse told Isabel not to worry. But Isabel insisted something was wrong and brought her children to the doctor for a test.

From the test, Isabel and Manuel learned that their children had lead poisoning. The doctor told them that Matthew, Sandra, and Peppe probably got it from paint dust—stirred up by the renovation Manuel did to improve the house.

The doctor said, “It is too early to tell how the children will be affected by the lead.” The doctor said that the effects of the lead may be lessened if Isabel and Manuel keep their house free of dust. He also told them to make sure that their children ate healthy meals because healthy, nutritious meals protect against more lead absorption.

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## 2 Vocabulary

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**Directions:** Review vocabulary words below and define each using simple English terms.

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neighborhood(s) (n.)	absorption (n.)
kitchen(s) (n.)	yard(s) (n.)
park(s) (n.)	original (adj.)
bedroom(s) (n.)	bathroom(s) (n.)
window(s) (n.)	door(s) (n.)
repair (v.); repair(s) (n.)	wallpaper (n.)
renovate (v.); renovation(s) (n.)	cabinet(s) (n.)
stomachache(s) (n.)	sick (adj.)
complain (v.)	magazine(s) (n.)
symptom(s) (n.)	scrape (v.)
behavior (n.)	sand (v.)
lead poisoning (n.)	lead (n.)
dust (n.)	paint (n.)

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## 3 Review and Discuss

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**Directions:** Review “Home Repairs” and answer the following questions.

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1. Describe the Ramirez’s perfect house. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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2. What kinds of repairs did the Ramirez's make in the house? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. How did Matthew, Peppe, and Sandra get lead poisoning? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What were the children's symptoms? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. How will the lead affect Matthew, Peppe, and Sandra? \_\_\_\_\_

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## 4

## Ways to Renovate\*

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**Directions:** Read the following passages.

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Before you repair or renovate, call your local health department officials and ask if they can test your home for lead-based paint. If the health department officials cannot test, ask them who can. You can also test it yourself with a kit you buy at a hardware store. Ask the store clerk for help.

There are many dangers involved in removing lead paint from your home. Every member of your family can be poisoned if you incorrectly remove the paint. There are three ways to make the lead paint in your home less dangerous. The first two are the safest ways to handle lead paint. Consider them first.

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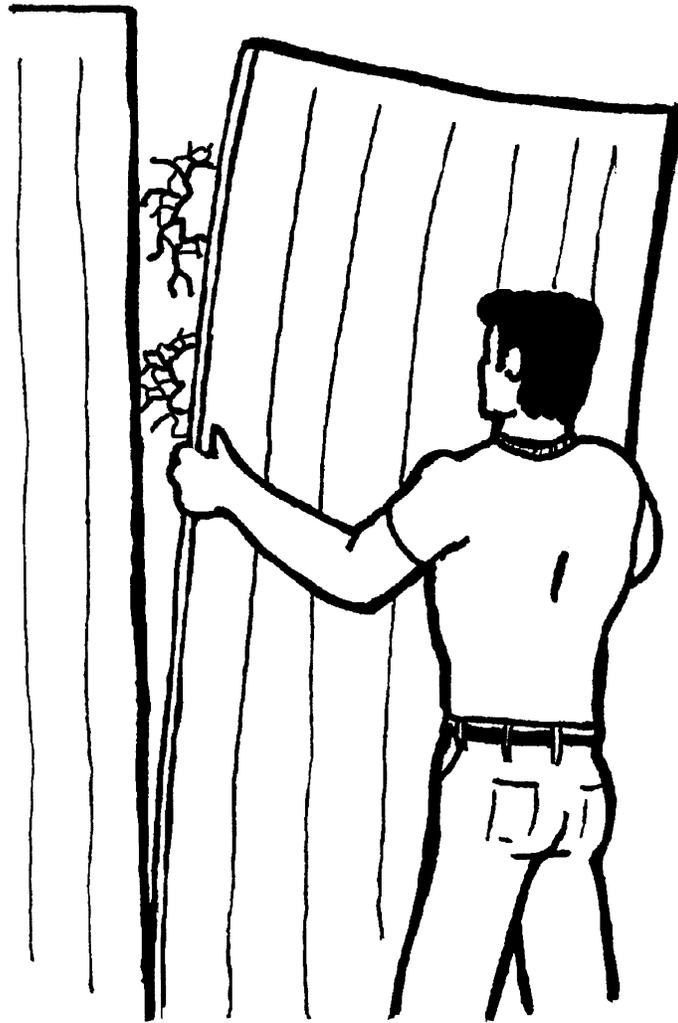
\* Adapted from "Lead in Paint," a pamphlet distributed by the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, California Department of Health Services, 1991.

## Replace it.



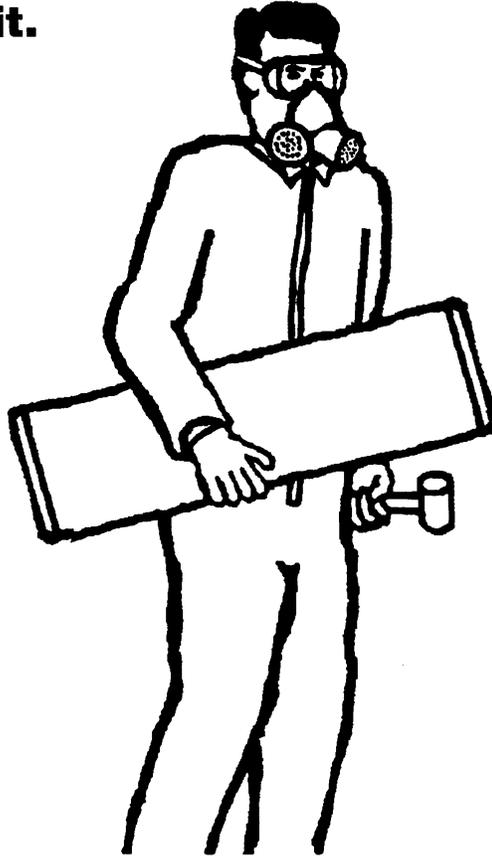
Replacing a lead painted object means removing the object from the house and replacing it with a new lead-free item. For example, remove a door by its hinges and replace it with a new safe door. Wrap the old item in heavy plastic and keep it away from your children. Replacing objects takes the lead out of your home and it does not create much lead dust.

## Cover it.



It is best to cover surfaces that cannot be replaced, such as walls or floors, with a long-lasting, tough material like sheetrock, paneling, or floor tiles. Covering does not get the lead paint out of your home; therefore, you must keep newly covered walls or floors in good condition. *Covering walls with new paint or hanging wallpaper is not a permanent method of covering lead paint. If the new paint or wallpaper peels, the lead paint will be exposed again.*

## Remove it.



Sanding, burning, or scraping is the most dangerous way of removing lead paint! This makes large amounts of lead dust or fumes, which can poison workers, household members, and pets. *Homeowners should not try to eliminate lead paint hazards from their property.* If your house contains lead paint, you should hire a professional contractor to remove the lead from your house.

## 5

## Vocabulary

**Directions:** Review the vocabulary words below and define each using simple English terms.

remove (v.)  
replace (v.)  
paneling (n.)  
wrap (v.)  
permanent (adj.)  
hazard(s) (n.)  
contaminated (adj.)  
contractor(s) (n.)  
carpet (n.)  
utensil(s) (n.)  
assure (v.)

cover (v.)  
sheetrock (n.)  
tile(s) (n.)  
hinge(s) (n.)  
fume(s) (n.)  
dispose (v.)  
respirator (n.)  
furniture (n.)  
drapes (n.)  
waste (n.)

**6**

# Review and Discuss

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**Directions:** Review “Ways to Renovate” and answer the following questions.

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1. What are three ways to make the lead paint in your home less dangerous?

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2. Which two are the safest ways to handle lead paint? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. How do you dispose of objects with lead paint on them? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Which materials are best for covering walls? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Which methods do *not* permanently remove lead paint? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What are the most dangerous ways to remove lead paint? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Have you ever done any home repairs or renovations? What were they? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Directions:** Role-play a conversation between a homeowner and a contractor about the removal of lead paint from the home. Refer to “Guidelines for Renovation and Removal of Lead Hazards” below during the role play.

### **Guidelines for Renovation and Removal of Lead Hazards\***

Ask contractors about their qualifications and experience removing lead-based paint, and their plans to follow these guidelines:

- √ People living in the house (especially young children and pregnant women) should keep out of the work area until the job is finished.
- √ People living in the house should remove all food and eating utensils from the work area.
- √ Contractors should remove all furniture, carpets, and drapes and seal the work area from the rest of the house. The contractor also should cover and seal the floor unless lead paint is to be removed from the flooring.
- √ Contractors should ensure that workers wear respirators designed to avoid inhaling lead.
- √ Contractors should not eat or drink in the work area.
- √ Contractors should cover and seal all cabinets and food surfaces.
- √ Contractors should clean up dust using special vacuum cleaners.
- √ Contractors should dispose of lead-based paint waste and contaminated materials in accordance with state and local regulations.
- √ Contractors should dispose of clothing worn in the room after working. Workers should not wear work clothing in other areas of the house. The contractor should wash work clothes separately.
- √ Contractors should use a shower, or at least a sink, to clean up after work.

\* Adapted from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development prepared guidelines for removing lead-based paint, published in the *Federal Register*, April 18, 1990.